IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims, as follows:

Claims 1-15 (canceled).

Claim 16 (currently amended): A tandem comprising a covering wheel and a levelling wheel for use in combination with a furrow-opener disk adapted for opening a furrow in soil for direct sowing of seeds in the furrow whereafter the furrow is closed by said covering wheel, the levelling wheel having a semipneumatic treading band for treading and copying the soil to determine a sowing depth, the treading band having a side area next to the furrow-opener disk, said side area having substantially ~~the form of~~ a depression forming an alveolus between the furrow-opener disk and [[the]] surface of the treading band of the levelling wheel that touches the soil, said depression adapted to receive soil pushed aside by the furrow-opener ~~device~~ disk and extending between one- and two-thirds of a width of said treading band of the levelling wheel; and

the covering wheel including a semipneumatic treading band to push loose soil at the side of the ~~open~~ furrow into the furrow ~~again~~ and onto the sown seeds to promote germination and emergence, wherein said treading band is provided with a plurality of substantially conical studs projecting radially outwards from the treading band and evenly distributed in a circular array around the treading band.

Claim 17 (new): A levelling wheel for use in direct sowing and fitted to a furrow-opener disk for opening a furrow in the ground, the levelling wheel having a semipneumatic treading band for treading and copying soil to determine a sowing depth, the treading band having a side area next to the furrow-opener disk, said side area having substantially a depression forming an alveolus between the furrow-opener disk and the surface of the treading band of the levelling wheel that touches the soil, said depression adapted to

receive soil pushed aside by the furrow-opener disk, wherein said depression or alveolus extends between one- and two-thirds of a width of said treading band of the levelling wheel.

Claim 18 (new): The levelling wheel of claim 17, wherein said depression or alveolus is dimensioned in accordance with the soil pushed aside by the furrow-opener disk.

Claim 19 (new): The levelling wheel of claim 17, wherein said depression is dimensioned such that the cross-section of said alveolus is about 30% greater than the cross-section of the soil pushed aside by the furrow-opener disk.

Claim 20 (new): The levelling wheel of claim 17, wherein said treading band has a profile in a form of a substantially cylindrical surface for treading on the soil and which progressively flattens off into a surface spanning the alveolus adjacent said furrow-opener disk.

Claim 21 (new): The levelling wheel of claim 20, wherein said profile of the treading band generally follows a sine-wave shape terminating in a cleaning tab that leans against the furrow-opener disk on assembly.

Claim 22 (new): The levelling wheel of claim 20, wherein said treading band has inner bearing chords.

Claim 23 (new): The levelling wheel of claim 22, wherein said chords include at least one chord directed between said surface for treading and said surface spanning the alveolus.

Claim 24 (new): The levelling wheel of claim 17, wherein said treading band is substantially resilient to prevent wet soil adhering thereto and for absorbing terrain unneveness.

Claim 25 (new): A covering wheel for use in either direct or pretilled sowing, the covering wheel including a semipneumatic treading band to push loose soil at a side of a furrow into the furrow and onto a seed to promote germination and emergence, wherein said treading band is provided with a plurality of substantially conical studs projecting radially outwards from the treading band and evenly distributed in a circular array around the treading band.

Claim 26 (new): The covering wheel of claim 25, wherein said studs form an angle with a plane of the wheel and the height and diameter of said studs depend on the treading band width.

Claim 27 (new): The covering wheel of claim 25, wherein said treading band has a trapezoidal cross-section.

Claim 28 (new): The covering wheel of claim 25, wherein the plurality of conical studs are present in a number that is a result of dividing a perimeter of said treading band by 1.7 and 2 times a square root of the radius of the wheel.

Claim 29 (new): The covering wheel of claim 25, wherein the conical studs have a base occupying around 90% of the treading band width.

Claim 30 (new): The covering wheel of claim 25, wherein the conical studs have a base with a diameter and a height wherein the height is between 1 and 1.2 times the base diameter.